

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 CU-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 EUR-12

ISO-00 IOE-00 NEA-10 EA-07 /058 W

----- 125192

P R 131549Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2934

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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NESCO

FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TOUSSAINT FROM PERREP

JONES

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, UNESCO

SUBJECT: UNESCO INFORMATION GROUP AND ASSESSMENT

1. US PERMDEL HAS BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE INFO AND ASSESSMENT OF UNESCO INFORMATION GROUP FOR BENEFIT DELEGATIONS OTHER SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. THE UNESCO INFORMATION GROUP IS AN INFORMAL GROUPING OF THE 23 OECD COUNTRIES WHICH MEETS TO DISCUSS POLITICAL ISSUES FACING THE ORGANIZATION. THE GROUP WAS FORMED TO MEET THE NEED TO HAVE A FORUM OF "LIKE MINDED" COUNTRIES WHICH WAS NOT BOUND BY RESTRICTIONS OR LIMITATIONS, AS IS THE GENEVA
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GROUP.

2. THE GROUP WAS ORGANIZED IN FIRST PART OF 1976 AND HAS MET ON AN AVERAGE OF TWICE A MONTH SINCE THEN. IT HAS PROVIDED A USEFUL FORUM FOR EXPLORING POLITICAL ISSUES, PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING ISRAEL.

3. THE CONCEPT OF SUCH A GROUP BEGAN WITH INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AMONG PERMREPS OF BELGIUM, AUSTRALIA AND US, WHO SAW THE NEED FOR A FORUM TO DISCUSS POLITICAL ISSUES. THESE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS GRADUALLY BECAME MORE STRUCTURED AND A LEADERSHIP CORE EMERGED. THIS WAS INITIALLY COMPOSED OF PERMREPS FROM BELGIUM, SWEDEN, AUSTRALIA, SWITZERLAND AND THE US. IT WAS AGREED MAINLY THROUGH TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS TO CONVENE A SMALL REPRESENTATIVE GROUP TO MEET AND DISCUSS HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A POLITICAL DISCUSSION GROUP. THE ORIGINAL INTERESTED PERMREPS EXPANDED THEIR GROUP TO INCLUDE CANADA AND ITALY MAKING A "FORMATION GROUP" OF SEVEN, BROADLY REPRESENTING WESTERN INTEREST. SELECTION WAS MADE ON THE BASIS OF KNOWN EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SEEING A POLITICAL DISCUSSION GROUP FORMED.

4. THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TO UNESCO VOLUNTEERED HIS OFFICES FOR PRELIMINARY MEETINGS. THREE SUCH MEETINGS WERE HELD OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN. THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES TO RESOLVE WERE THOSE OF DEFINING COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE GROUP.

5. AFTER RATHER THOROUGH DISCUSSION IT WAS AGREED THAT DEFINITE PARAMETERS FOR MEMBERSHIP MUST BE ESTABLISHED TO PREVENT DISPUTES. THE OECD FORMULA WAS DECIDED UPON SINCE IT WAS COMPOSED OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WESTERN STATES AND OFFERED A FIXED GROUPING WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN ACCEPTED.

6. IT WAS AGREED THAT STRUCTURE MUST BE INFORMAL AND NO OFFICERS SHOULD EXIST. CHAIRMANSHIP WAS TO ROTATE ALPHABETICALLY AND THERE WERE NO FIXED MEETING TIMES. ANY MEMBER WAS GIVEN THE RIGHT TO CALL A MEETING TO DISCUSS ANY TOPIC. THE MEMBER SIMPLY NOTIFIED THE UPCOMING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHAIRMAN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMING THE MEMBERS OF THE MEETING, FIXING A TIME AND PLACE AND CHAIRING THE MEETING. THE CHAIRMAN ALSO INFORMS MEMBERS OF THE AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED. ANY MEMBER MAY ADD OTHER ITEMS.

7. SWEDEN WAS SELECTED AS FIRST CHAIRMAN BY THE STEERING GROUP AS IT WAS A NEUTRAL COUNTRY AND ITS PERMREP WAS AN ABLE AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT. THE CHAIRMANSHIP

THEN ROTATED ALPHABETICALLY, TURKEY BEING NEXT.
ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN VERY GOOD WITH ALL MEMBERS ATTENDING AT LEAST SOME OF THE MEETINGS. AT FIRST FRANCE BALKED, BUT FINALLY HAS DECIDED TO ATTEND REGULARLY. NO RECORDS OR MINUTES ARE KEPT AND DISCUSSIONS ARE COMPRE-

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 CU-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2935

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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HENSIVE YET INFORMAL.

8. THE UNESCO GROUP HAS NOW MET OFTEN ENOUGH TO HAVE PERMANENT STATUS. IT HAS EXPANDED ITS FUNCTIONS AND IS MOVING TOWARD INFORMAL COMMITTEES. A "SOUNDING GROUP" COMPOSED OF PERMREPS OF NORWAY, SWITZERLAND AND AUSTRIA WAS FORMED TO SOUND OUT MEMBERS OF THE UNESCO EUROPEAN REGION ON POSSIBILITIES OF ISRAEL MEMBERSHIP. THIS

GROUP HAS MET WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, THE ISRAELIS AND THE SOVIETS TO ASSESS THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ISRAEL GETTING INTO THE REGIONAL GROUP AT THE NEXT GENERAL CONFERENCE. THE "SOUNDING GROUP" HAS PROVED EXTREMELY VALUABLE IN EXTRACTING INFORMATION AND PROVIDING THE BASIS FOR DEFINING STRATEGIES.

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9. AS AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT, PERMDEL IS CONVINCED OF THE VALUE OF THE INFORMATION GROUP. IT HAS FULFILLED A NEED FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND STRATEGIES WHICH HAS BEEN LACKING AMONG WESTERN MEMBER STATES. THE MAIN REQUIREMENT FOR GETTING STARTED IS FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND TO MOVE QUIETLY WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED PERMREPS. UNTIL THE GROUP IS A "FAIT ACCOMPLI". THE OTHERS WILL THEN GET ON THE BAND WAGON.
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